

## The Visit

Each time we come there are a few extra stairs.

We want to be tired when we get there and  
sleep in the dark orchid room.

Insects eat through screens,  
the closet is full of dead clothes

and David's letters.

In the morning we eat as much as we can and  
talk of wars and parties. the new prints we bought  
were they expensive?

Will they last?

Say something to please or to  
make people laugh. Don't hurt anyone or explain

But why does my sister stay locked  
in a strange rage, alone, behind closed doors?

Bad paintings hanging on walls. the wood is  
being eaten away

and those old artificial flowers.

Still an apple tree grows outside the apartment window  
where no tree should,  
tall and thin with very small green apples.

Later we go to the new shop  
that was once a First National  
and throw nails down over the abandoned railroad.

walk past the brick town house and  
all the clapboard homes where daughters of Episcopal  
ministers used to live.

Back in the high rooms  
there are photographs of relatives  
newly dead. A father. my father I think, pasted on  
mirrors

from 1938 or 39.

And the waterfall rushes. even in  
July. the creek waters in the orchid room are

louder than crying.

We must sort things out, talk about stocks and  
settlements,  
the divorce that was stopped by a death.

Night beetles fall upsidedown to the floor  
near dusty bottles.

Later in the day we leave, put the heavy love at  
a distance.  
These images can never be unified

or undone.

-- Lyn Lifshin

Albany, New York

this  
slightly  
japanese  
scene

thin	house -- 1925	
pinest		
&		
oriental-	oriental	
looking	rug	
building	with	
	wrinkles	
out front	in it	
red robin	)small	ancestors
trees	fireplace	
branches	for	go in
of	cigarette	between
shocking	butts	the althea
pink	)sickly	& find
	taffeta	the stable
men sit	& muslin	falling in
above the	ruffles	a
red wheels	)scent	shape
of a	of l'origan	of shingles
truck		snowball
in the		bush
patched		at window
sun		

-- Gloria Kenison

Natick, Massachusetts